

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURES		
Reference: 02-03	Effective Date: April 2, 1992 Revision Date: June 30, 2000	Page 1 of 5
SUBJECT: CODE OF ETHICS		
RATIONALE: The purpose of this policy is to promote ethical behavior by Department employees. This Code goes beyond specific laws and regulations, and recognizes that Department employees have an obligation to protect the rights of clients, the public and other employees, while exhibiting exemplary behavior as state employees.		

POLICY:

This Code of Ethics applies to all work-related activities of Department employees and is not intended to govern their private lives. However, when non-work related activities of employees clearly affect the ability of the Department to provide credible, professional services with the community, employees are expected to conform to this Code and relevant professional standards and to comply with all applicable laws, including statutes, rules and policies. Conduct that violates professional standards or other laws may be unethical and subject to employee discipline even if it is not specifically listed in this Code. Employees are governed by this policy in addition to any Division or other policies under which they work.

I. FOSTERING GOOD CLIENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC TRUST

A. RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS AND THE PUBLIC

1. In relationships with clients and the public, employees shall:
 - Respect and protect the civil and legal rights of clients.
 - Respect personal and professional boundaries. This precludes, but is not limited to, engaging in business transactions, dating, or engaging in sexual activities or illegal activities with clients. It also prohibits exploiting relationships with Department clients for personal advantage, or soliciting Department clients for private practice.
 - Treat clients and the public with respect and in a professional manner and not abuse them physically, sexually or verbally by engaging in any language or activity which is demeaning, belittling, or otherwise offensive.
 - Avoid relationships or commitments that would knowingly conflict with the best interests of clients, the agency, or the Department.
2. In relationships with clients and the public, employees shall not:
 - Use their positions or information acquired through their positions, to coerce or otherwise influence clients or the public to provide favors for themselves or others.
 - Jeopardize the health or safety of clients.

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B. MANAGING CLIENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION

In managing client records and information, employees shall:

1. Respect and protect the appropriate confidentiality and privacy of records and information concerning clients. Employees shall not use such client information for personal purposes.
2. Tape or record client activities only as permitted by law or policy, including DHS Policy 05-04.
3. Not knowingly violate any state or federal laws (including the Government Records Access and Management Act, often known as "GRAMA") that specify when and how clients, other agencies and the public may inspect or copy the Department's records, including client records.
4. Not falsify or wrongfully destroy any record, report, or claim, or knowingly enter or cause to be entered any false or improper information in Department records.

C. COMMUNICATIONS WITH CLIENTS AND THE PUBLIC

In communications with clients and the public, employees shall:

1. Comply with the Department's Public Information Policy (Section 01-06) when initiating or receiving contacts with reporters or other members of the news media, and exercise care to avoid any conflicts of interest between their own views and interests and those of the Department.
2. Not purposely withhold from clients, accurate and complete information regarding the extent and nature of the Department services available to them.

II. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER EMPLOYEES

A. WORK RELATIONSHIPS

In work relationships, employees shall:

1. Treat each other respectfully and professionally.
2. Use non-abusive, polite and decent language; this prohibits any language or activity that is demeaning, belittling, or offensive.
3. Respect the religious values and cultural differences of colleagues.
4. Avoid slanderous or malicious gossip.

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B. SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS

Supervisors or other administrators shall:

1. Treat subordinates with respect and dignity.
2. Encourage and facilitate the professional development of employees.
3. Not exploit other employees for personal favors or gain.
4. Not use their position of authority to harass, stalk, discriminate, or become involved in sexual relationships with another employee.

III. PERSONAL WORK ETHICS

A. LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Employees will obey applicable civil or criminal laws, regulations, rules or policy governing their work or professional activities.

B. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

To maintain and exercise professional competence, employees shall:

1. Represent truthfully to employer, clients and prospective clients their professional credentials and licensure, education, training, and experience.
2. Report through appropriate channels any known or suspected improper treatment of employees or clients such as: abuse, discrimination, stalking or harassment.
3. Not engage in conduct on or off the job that compromises the ability of the employee or agency to fulfill professional responsibilities.

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C. PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

During the performance of duties, employees shall:

1. Use Department resources only for intended purposes.
2. Maintain appropriate, approved work schedules.
3. Not engage in any activity that could be considered a dereliction of duty, including, but not limited to, absence without leave, abuse of leave, neglect of standard performance, reluctance or negligence to perform assigned duties, inattention to duty, neglect of responsibilities, or leaving the work area unattended or inappropriately attended.
4. Not participate in, condone, conceal or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, misrepresentation or theft.
5. Not consume or use alcohol or illegal substances or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while on compensated work time or while treating clients or while on call or on State property or while operating any vehicle. (For purposes of this policy, employee drug levels that exceed the standards adopted in 49 C.F.R. constitute "use".)
6. Not consume or use legal controlled substances or be under the influence of legal controlled substances while on compensated work time or while treating clients or while on call or on State property or while operating any vehicle, if such use or consumption will substantially impair the employee's judgement or job performance.
7. Not unlawfully manufacture, dispense, possess or distribute any controlled substance or alcohol during working hours, on State property or while operating any vehicles while on duty.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. REPORTING VIOLATIONS

Employees shall immediately report all violations of this Code through appropriate channels. Employees and their supervisors may consult with the Office of Human Resources staff in determining how to respond to violations of this Code. If a Code violation appears to involve potential liability for the Department, supervisors shall also consult with the Office of Administrative Support staff for advice or assistance. When a violation results in an employee corrective or disciplinary action, the employee's supervisor shall place documentation of the violation and the resulting action in the employee's official personnel file, consistent with DHRM rules.

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B. VIOLATIONS OF CODE

Depending on the circumstances, the violation and the degree of the employee's culpability, the Department may take one or more of the following agency actions:

1. Corrective action;
2. Disciplinary action;
3. Legal action, including criminal prosecution.

Department administrators may consult with the Office of Human Resources regarding the most appropriate action to take in response to an employee's violation of this Code.

If an employee's violation of this Code results in either personal gain to that employee or personal harm or loss to a client, the State or another employee, disciplinary action is generally warranted. If the employee's supervisor decides not to take disciplinary action, the supervisor shall document the violation, the gravity of the violation and the extent of the resulting gain or losses, and the reasons why disciplinary action was not warranted in the particular situation.

Robin Arnold-Williams

DATE: 06-30-00

Robin Arnold-Williams, Executive Director
Department of Human Services

